

THE
EXAMINATIONS,
Arraignment & Conviction
of *George Sprat*, Notary
in Aye-mouth,

Together with his constant and
extraordinaire behaviour at his
death, in *Edenborough*,
Aug. 12. 1608.

Written & set forth by *Sir William Hart*,
Knight, L. Iustice of Scotland. K

Whereby appeareth the treason-
able deuce betwixt *John* late Earle of
Gowry and *Robert Logane* of *Restalrig*
(commonly called *Leslie*) plotted by
them for the cruell murdering
of our most gracious
Sovereigne.

Before which Treatise is prefixed
also a Preface, written by *G. Abbot*
Doctour of Divinitie, and Deane of
Winchester, who was present
at the sayd Sprats
execution.

LONDON
Printed by *Melch. Bradwood*,
for *William Aspley*.

1609.





A P R E F A C E

to the Reader.



Mong those troubles & crosses, wherewithall our heauenlie Father is pleased to exercise his best children, while they remaine in this Tabernacle of their flesh, there is no one more frequent, than such euill and slanderous reports, as the virulent tongues of malicious persons, out of a hatred to their vertues, are desirous to lay vpon them. For there was neuer Age nor Countrey, wherein either man or woman was adorned with rare and eminent qualities, for the seruice of God, and aduancement of true religion, but immediatly such as were ill-affected began to imploy their wits, and beat their braines, how by calum-

^a Num. 12.^b Num. 16.

3.

^c Dan. 6.

13.

^d Neh. 6. 6.^e Act. 16.
20.^f Euseb.
Ecccl. Hist.
lib. 4. 7.^g Lib. 5. 1.

niation and forged imputations, they might
 obscure the lustre of those singular parts,
 which their quicke but enuious eye had dis-
 couered in them. That worthy *Moyfes* the
 meekest ^a man vpon earth is reproched as
 ambitious, and charged by *Core*, to ^b take too
 much vpon him. That admirable *Daniel* was
^c accused to the King as a contemner of his
 Greatnesse, and violater of his Lawes. It
 was objected to zealous and iust *Nehemiab* by
^d *Sanballat*, that himselfe and the people of
Iuda intended a rebellion. *Paul* and *Silas*,
 two great instruments of Gods glory, were
 complained vpon as seditious persons, and
^e disturbers of the peace and quietnesse of
 the city. The old Christians, men no doubt
 of vertuous behauiour, yet because in time
 of persecution they assembled themselues
 together in the night, for the worship of
 their God, and profession of their faith, were
 reported by the Gentiles to haue the Feasts
 of ^f *Thyestes*, (that is, to eat the flesh of chil-
 dren) and to do as *Oedipus* did, that is, pro-
 miscuously to commit fornication with
 their mothers, sisters and daughters. Yea,
 their owne ^g seruants were brought by the
 terrors

terrors of the Infidels to accuse them of such crimes. *Tertullian* complaineth of this, declaring that it was objected to the Christians; ^h that they killed a babe new borne, and in the blood thereof did dip their Eucharist, and so eat it; as also, that suffering their dogs of purpose to ouerturne their lights, they in the darke committed incest with their mothers and daughters. Hence it grew, as a kinde of Prouerbe, That it was the part of Christians to doe good, and yet to be ill spoken of. So ⁱ *Euagrius* reporteth, touching that holy and blessed Emperour *Constantine the Great*, that the Ethnicks laded him with many false criminations, because he tooke away their Heathenish superstitions, and in place thereof aduanced the seruice of Christ Iesus.

In all which accusations, and other of like nature, (if we looke aduisedly into them) we shall perceiue, that both Sathan hath his worke, and euill men haue a part, yea that God himselfe hath a finger. Sathan hath his worke, because (as *Cyprian* writing of *Cornelius*, saith) It is ^k euermore the worke of the Diuell, that he may with lies teare the seruants of God, and by false opinions spread concerning them may defame

^h *Tertull.*
Apolog.
cap. 2.

ⁱ *Euagrius*
Eccl. Hist.
lib. 3. 40.

^k *Cyprian.*
Epist. ad
Antonian.
Lib. 4. 2.

their glorious name; that such as are bright in the light of their owne conscience may be sordidated, or dimmed, by the reports of other. Euill men haue their part, either because with *Zoilus*, when they^l can do no hurt to the good and vertuous, at least they will speake ill of them; or els, because (as *Hierome* writeth)^m It is the solace of euill men to carpe at the good, thinking that by the great number of offenders the guilt of their faults is diminished and abated. Nay, God hath a finger in it, to trie & sharpen men, and by that meanes to fit them to himselfe. For flanders haue that force in them, as *Gregory* well noteth, speaking thus:ⁿ Going thorow almost all examples, we finde, that there hath not beene one good man whom the naughtinesse of euill men hath not tried: for, that I may so speake, the sword of our soule is not brought to the exactnesse of sharpnesse, if the file of other mens naughtinesse hath not rubbed and fretted it. Againe, in as much as we should grow into deepe and dangerous securitie, if it were not for such remembrances, our heavenly Father is contented that by such calumniations we should be rowzed from the sleepeinesse and drowzinesse of the world. ° *Pliny* writeth, that the Lion is subiect to no sicknesse,

but

^l *Aelian.*
Hist. lib.
11. 10.

^m *Hieron.*
Epist. 10.
ad Furiam.

ⁿ *Gregor.*
Hom. 38. in
40. Hom.

° *Plin Na.*
14. Hist.
lib 8 16.

but only a *fastidium*, or fulnesse of stomacke: wherewithall when hee is oppressed, the way to cure him is to offer him some contumely; which is by tying an Ape neere him: for the Lion is so moued and vexed for the time, with the tricks which the Ape playeth, that he riddeth and putteth ouer that, which so much before offended him. Euen so God vseth the contumelies of base persons, & the reproches of the vilest, to rowze vp men of excellent spirits, that they surfet not in voluptuousnesse, and so consequently be lulled asleepe in idle securitie, to their owne harme and peraduenture ruine.

But be it for one or all these reasons, certaine it is, that in our age as well as in times by-past, the deereft children of God haue tasted of this triall, and haue been forced to endure very horrible imputations & staining aspersions, which the venomous tongues of vngodly men haue striued to cast vpon them. It were no hard matter to name very strange calumniationes which haue been inuented by the vassals of Antichrist, and published by the adorers of the beast in diuers books (which are no better than defamatory

libels) against Gods servants of the highest
 ranke vpon earth, because they ouer-turned
 the strong holds of idolatry, and gaue free
 passage to the Gospell of Christ Iesus. But I
 forbear to giue such particular instances,
 and rather leaue to the consideration of the
 wise, whether it may euer be hoped, that
 such irreligious creatures (who haue solde
 themselves to Sathan the accuser of the bre-
 thren) will make spare to lash and scourge
 such single persons as stand in their way, &
 hinder their designs; when they make no
 conscience to brand our holy faith, and the
 generalitie of our profession, with reports
 most odious, and such as must needs be ac-
 knowledged for abominable, if they should
 be true: but in sooth are in the sight of God,
 of Angels and men, before heauen & earth,
 but plaine fictions and forgeries, containing
 in them no parcell of veritie. Of which sort
 are those defamations, which a countryman
 of ours, without all shame, auoucheth in a
 Pamphlet not long since put out, and pub-
 lished to the world; *That the Protestants are
 bound in conscience, neuer to aske God forgiveness of
 their sinnes: That the Protestants are bound in con-*

p Certaine
 Articles or
 forcible rea-
 sons printed
 at Antwerpe
 1600:

(also)

A

science

science to avoid all good works: That the Protestants make God the author of sinne; the only cause of sinne: that man sinneth not; that God is worse than the Diuell. And that of ⁹ Rossius writing against the French King now reigning: *Hominum animas cum corporibus interire, & homines a brutis pecoribus nihil differre, Evangelicorum infinita millia credunt.* Infinite thousands of Protestants doe beleue that the soules of men die together with their bodies, and that men do nothing differ from brute beasts.

⁹ Ross. con-
tra Henric.
Gallum.
cap. 4. 5.

Such truthlesse, shamelesse, and gracelesse assertions they have not sticke to proclame openly in the face of the Sunne. The knowledge whereof should cause all men indifferently affected, not to be credulous or light of beleefe, when they finde gall and bitter-nesse cast out of the mouth or penne of an enemy of the Gospel against any contend-
ing for the truth, though it be but a priuate man; but especially to suspend their iudgements, when persons of highest quality, for maintaining Gods cause, are traduced by an enemy, or defamed by some vile one, whose tongue and pen indeed is no slander, as we commonly speake. For these great ones are
5 the special marke whereat malice doth aime;

* Plin. Nat.
tur. Hist.
lib. 7. 27.

* Plin. de
viris illu-
stris.

* Diog. La-
ert. in An-
tisth.

and as poison ordinarily hasteneth to the heart, so doth enuie let driue at the head, at those who be most eminent in the State and Common-wealth. When Cato the elder liued, there was not in all Rome so woorthy a man as he: for (as Pliny noteth) he was the best Orator, the best Leader or Generall in the field, the best Senatour or Counsellor that was in that Citie: yet was he so intreated as neuer man was, being publikely called to his answer foure and fortie seuerall times, whereby one while his fame was hazarded, another while his life: and yet alwayes he was honorably, or as the younger Pliny hath it, gloriously absolved and acquitted. Doubtlesse there was against him a great deale of spleene, a very great deale of malice. From the touch whereof, euen Kings and Princes are so farre from being free, that they are more subiect to it than any other persons: which made * Antisthenes to say, That it was a Kingly thing, when thou hast done wel, to be ill spoken of for thy labor. And if we be desirous to see a famous example of this, there is no one more notable than that of holy David, who being first a Prophet, and afterwards a King, (but in both

bas

8

most

most vnspotted touching the crimes layd against him) yea being a man after Gods own heart, yet was accused and charged with many hainous iniquities; which caused him to complaine both before and after his coming to the Crowne: as vnto Saul: *Wherefore giuest thou an eare vnto mens words, that say: Beholde, David seeketh euill against thee? And to God himselfe: O^u Lord my God, if I haue done this thing, meaning, which they layd vnto him; if there be any wickednesse in my hands, intending, such as they would fasten vpon him, then let the enemy persecute my soule and take it.* And in another place, speaking to the slanderer Aduersarie, *Thy^{*} tongue imagineth mischief, and is like a sharpe razor that cutteth deceitfully.* And yet further: *The^x proud haue imagined a lie against me.* So in the next Psalme: *Deliu^r my soule O Lord from lying lips, and from a deceitfull tongue.* These things, and that the² drunkards did make songs vpon him, did many times exceedingly grieue him, that he who laboured to seeme innocent, should be reproched as nocent; that he who was but the Patient, should be held for the Agent; that the man wronged, should be reported

*1. Sam.
24.10.*

** Psal. 7.
3.*

** Psal. 52.
2.*

** Psal. 119.
69.*

** Psal. 120.
2.*

** Psal. 69.
12.*

^a 2. Sam.
16. 7.

^b Psal. 43.
1.

^c vers. 5.

to do wrong vnto other ; that he whose life was sought, should be termed by *Shimei*, ^a a man of blood, and a murtherer. This troubled & grieved him aboue measure. For it is the property of innocency and integritie, that it it may finde no other reward, yet it would gladly shine in the simplicitie and sinceritie of it selfe. But when there was no other helpe to be freed from those slanders, *David* had one assured remedie ; that was, to retire himselfe to the Lord, & commend his cause to his Maker : As he excellently doth in the three and fortieth Psalme, where being oppressed by the malice of his aduersaries, and complaining of it in the first verse : ^b *Judge me O God, and defend my cause against the vnnmercifull people : deliuer me from the deceitfull & wicked man,* he helpeth himselfe in the last verse, rebuking the impatiency which he found in his owne soule, and directing his affections vnto another course, ^c *Why art thou cast downe my soule ? and why art thou disquieted within me ? wait on God : for I will yet giue him thanks : he is my present helpe and my God.*

Many men haue been desirous to haue their fame cleered from the reproches of
their

their enemies, and haue sought meanes to haue their hearts eased from the disturbances and distempers whereinto false accusations haue put them. *Zeno* is much commended, that with such calmnesse he could turne aside those bitter taunts which some bestowed on him: for being asked, how he did bear himselfe against euil speeches: ^d *I do*, saith he, *as if an Embassadour should be sent vnto me, and I should returne him without an answer.* This for a Philosopher, who was but an heathen man, was an excellent resolution. But in these words of *Dauid*, there is a way more noble than *Zeno* could conceiue; that is, to looke vp to our great God, and commit all to him, expecting his good leasure. It is not enough when a man being priuy to his owne innocencie doth not boile within himselfe, or fret against the wicked (which are things ^e forbidden vnto vs) but he must goe a step farther, and propose to his owne heart some more notable example. And in this case who is rather to be imitated by a Christian, than our Sauior Christ? Concerning whom *S. Chrysostome* said well: That ^f *when he cast out diuels, and did innumerable good things, and yet was*

^d *Diog. Laert. in Zenon.*

^e *Psal. 37. 1.*

^f *Chrys. Homil. 1. de incompreh. Dei natura.*

ill spoken of; against those men who said, that he had the Diuell, he did not send any thunderbolt, he did not ouerthrow those blasphemous mouthes, he consumed not with fire those vnchaste, vngratefull, unworthie tongues of theirs: but only with these words put aside those euill speeches; I haue not the Diuell, but I honour him who sent me. This is most truly related of our Sauour: but there was in him somewhat els, which is better obserued by S. Peter: ¶ When he was reuiled, he reuiled not againe; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed it to him that iudgeth righteously. And this, committing it to him that iudgeth righteously, was the course which Dauid vsed: to wait patiently on the Lord, to cast vp his eies to heauen, and commending to God the integrity of his waies, to leaue all to his disposing. And this is the very Lesson which hee teacheth both himselfe and other. For in the seuen and twentieth Psalme, hauing spoken of his^h aduersaries, of false witnesses which rose vp against him, and such as speak cruelly, he concludeth with this document, *Hope in the Lord; bee strong, and hee shall comfort thine heart, and trust in the Lord.* Which is the most sound instruction, that any creature

can

1. Pet. 2.
23.

h Psal. 27.
12. 14.

can haue :: to looke vp to his Creator (to whom all hearts are open, and no priuie thing can be secret) and to commend to his prouidence, to his fatherly care and wisdom, the vnspottednesse of his waies, and the simplicity of his consideration. And assuredly that God who is the God of truth, will bee the patron and protectour of innocencie in his seruants. It is a strong consolation which Dauid giueth in this case; *Commit thy way vnto the Lord, and trust in him, and he shall bring it to passe. And hee shall bring forth thy righteousnesses like light, and thy iudgement as the noone day.* But it followeth: *Wait patiently vpon the Lord, and hope in him :: As if that must bee the meanes to attaine thy desire :: not to run before thy Maker, and appoint him the time when thy integrity shall bee cleared, and the dimming clouds of obloquie shall be blown from thy estimation, but to leaue that to his managing, to his dispose and direction.* For as S. Chrysostome telleth vs: *If it be in the power of God to giue vnto vs, it is also in his power to giue when himselfe pleaseth.* It is said of him, that hee doth all things in measure, number and waight. But if

*Psal. 37.
5.6.*

*Chrys. in
Psal. 129.*

*Sapient.
11.17.*

psal. 43.
5.

before the number bectully, or the measure
be mp, thou wilt limit him the time when
thy innocencie must appeare: thou takest
on thee to be wiser than the Lord, and in a
sort mounting vp into his throne in heauen,
thou doest iuttle him out of his seat of ma-
iesty and eternity. If thou wilt set downe
the decree for time or place, or the maner of
purging thy selfe, or how the wickednes of
thine enemies must be displaied, thou ma-
kest thy selfe the Iudge, and the Lord of hea-
uen and earth shall be but thy executioner.
Leaue the maine then to him (which doth
not fore-cloze thee, but that thou mayst vse
all honest meanes to lay open thy vnspot-
tednesse) and thou shalt haue reason with
David to thanke him, and say: *He is my
present helpe and my God.*

And in truth it is strange to see the Lords
worke in this behalfe, how, when the fame
of his seruants hath beene vniustly denigra-
ted by false accusations, hee taking the mat-
ter into his hands hath in his good time dis-
pelled all mists of slander. Heereof David
himselfe had singular experience. For when
Saul was informed that David sought his life,

and

and by the often ingeminations of malicious men this was taken for a truth, and David was accordingly persecuted, and in danger to be murdered, God put Saul ^u two severall times into the hands of David, that easily hee might haue slaine him: which being entertained as an invincible argument of David's fidelity, Saul himselfe by the irretrageable evidence of truth was forced to crie out, *° Thou art more righteous than I:: for thou hast rendered me good, and I have rendered thee evill.* And a second time: *P I have sinned: come againe my sonne David,; for I will doe thee no more harme, because my soule was precious in thine eyes this day: behold I have done foolishly,; and have erred exceedingly.* Eusebius hath such another example, of *9 Narcissus* the Bishop of Ierusalem, who was a vertuous and worthy man, and yet by three persons was accused of a hainous crime. The story doth not cleerely deliver what it was: but by circumstances it may be gathered to bee incontinency. These three to give the more reputation to that accusation, wherewithall they charged him, did use diuers imprecations and execrations on themselves, if those things were not true

1. Sam.
24.4.6.
26.7.

1. Sam.
24.18.

1. Sam.
26.21.

9 Euseb.
Eccel. Hist.
lib. 6. 8.

which they objected against him. As the one wished that himselfe might be burnt, the second that he might die of a loathsome disease, the third that he might lose the sight of his eyes. This constant and consenting crimination so affected *Narcissus*, though priuy to his own vprightnesse, that he withdrew himselfe from his abode, and liuing priuately commended his righteous cause to God: which had such effect, that not very long after, the first of his accusers was indeed consumed with fire, the house being burnt in which he remained: the second died of the same disease which he wished vpon himselfe: and the third being much affrighted with the punishment of his fellows, had remorse of his sinne, and came and openly acknowledged the conspiracy of them three against innocent *Narcissus*: but withall, he had such feeling of his owne iniquity, that powring out continuall teares, hee lost the sight of his eyes with the rheume that descended. A most memorable narration to their comfort, who, being wronged by men in their fame or good name, commend their cause to God. Like to which is that of

Theodoret, who reporteth, that *Eustathius* the Patriarke of *Antioch* had many combats with the *Arrians* for defence of Christs truth : and when he still preuailed against them , they out of their malice suborned a harlot to accuse him of fornication, and openly to maintaine, that a childe was his which she held in her armes : by which meanes hee was constrained to flie to the same succour that *Narcissus* formerly had done; which had such force with Almighty God , that within a while after the harlot was stricken with a grievous sicknesse, which wrought in her so powerfully , that shee freely confessed the combination of the *Arrians* against the holy man: and how shee was suborned to accuse him wrongfully, whereof she was now sorry. But whereas she had said that *Eustathius* was the father of her childe; that indeed was true of another *Eustathius* , but not of the Bishop of *Antioch*. Wherein we may beholde , that euen so long agoe Equiuocation was in vse, but it was with leaud persons , as heretikes and harlots : but withall Gods worke appeareth , that he will not euermore suffer innocencie to be oppressed, and truth to be

Theodor.
Eccl. Hist.
lib. 1. 20.
21.

wronged; but at the last veritie shall breake forth, as the Sunne which was darkned with a cloud. And this mercifull fauor of God to his seruants was not onely in the ages past, but our dayes haue experiments of the very like occurrents; as in a famous case lately acted at *Edenborough* may ensibly be discouered: whereof, because I was an eye-witnesse at my late being there by the commandement of his Maiestie, I haue thought it my dutie, in honor to God and loue to his truth, to declare what I saw and heard; that this following Treatise penned by an honorable personage of *North-Britaine* might not goe forth vnaccompanied with the Declaration of one of *South-Britaine*, for so much as hee beheld.

There are few in this Iland of any vnderstanding, but haue heard of the traiterous and bloodie attempt of the Earle *Gowrie* and his brother against the person and life of our most blessed Souereigne. Wherein albeit there were such euidences and arguments, as that any man who would haue taken notice thereof, might haue been sufficiently informed therein euen at the very first; and af-

terward

terward by the cleere depofitions (for moft pregnant circumftances) and ample attettations of many perfons of honour and qualitie, the Parliament of that Kingdome tooke full knowledge thereof, and accordingly proceeded to the forfeiting of the whole eftate of that Earle, and of his heires for euer: yet fome humorous men, whom in that refpect I may iuftly terme vnthankfull vnto God, and vndutifull to their King, out of fond imaginations, or rather, if you will, feditious fuppositions of their owne, did both at home and abroad, by whisperings and fecret buzzings into the eares of the people (who were better perfwaded of them than indeed there was caufe) imploy their wits and tongues to obfcure the truth of that matter, and to caft an imputation where it was leaft deferved: Which when God had permitted for the fpace of fome yeeres to ranckle and fester in the bowels of thofe who were the Authours of it; the fame God in his wifdome at laft meaning to cure them if they would be cured of that maladie, difcouered; that in the fame treason, although carried neuer fo fecretly, there were other

confederates, of whom hitherto the world had taken no kinde of knowledge. And albeit two of the persons interested in that businesse were lately dead, and departed vnto far greater torment than all the earth could lay vpon them (vnlesse they died repentant) yet it was apprehended that a third partie remained, who had fore-knowledge of that conspiracie, and was able to vtter much of the secrets of it; one *George Sprat*, a Notarie inhabiting at *Aye-mouth*, a place well known in that countrey. Which matter, or some part thereof, being made knowento an^r honourable person, a most faithfull seruant to his Maiestie, first by some words that fell from *Sprat* himselfe, and afterwards by some papers found vpon him, it was so wisely carried, and so prudently brought about, by the great care and diligence of that noble man (God Almighty blessing the businesse) that so much was reueiled as followeth in this Treatise, vpon the Acts to be seene; which are here set downe at large, word for word as they agree with the processe originall, and other examinations, that such as haue beene auerse may at last receiue satisfac-

of The Earle
of Dunbar.

tion.

ction. Touching all which, I shall say nothing, but only report that which befell vpon the day of his death, when hee suffered for that treason. Hauing then the sentence passed on him vpon Friday the twelfth of August 1608 in the fore-noone, and publicly being warned to prepare himselfe to his end, which must be that after-dinner, he most willingly submitted himselfe vnto that punishment, which (as he then acknowledged) he had iustly deserved. And being left to himselfe til dinner-time was expired, then came to him into that priuate place where hee remained, some of the * reuerend Bishops, diuers L. L. of the Session, two of the English Ministers there imployed by his Maestie, with diuers other Ministers of the towne of *Edenborough*: Before whom he first acknowledged and auouched his former confession to be true, and that he would die in the same; and then falling on his knees in a corner of that roome, where he and they then were, in a prayer to God vttered aloud he so passionately deplored his former wickednesses, but especially that sinne of his for which he was to die; that a man may iustly

* Archb. of
Glasg.
Bis. of Brickb.
L. Halyrudeb.
L. Collector.
L. Register.
L. Justice.
D. Maxey.
M. Hodson.
M. P. Gale.
way.
M. I. Hall.
N. Ch. Lumsden.
den. with
others.

say, hee did in a sort deiect and cast downe
himselfe to the gates of hell, as if he should
there haue beene swallowed vp in the gulfe
of desperation: yet presently laying holde
vpon the mercies of God in Christ, he raised
himselfe, and strangely lifted vp his soule
vnto the Throne of Grace, applying ioy and
comfort to his owne heart so effectually, as
can not well be described. In the admitting
of this consolation into his inward man, he
burst out into teares, so plentifully flowing
from him, that for a time they stopped his
voice. The sight & hearing wherof wrought
so forcible an impression in those persons of
honour and learned men. who beheld him,
that there was scant any one of them, who
could refraine teares in the place, as diuers
of themselves that day did witnesse vnto
me. The effect of his prayer was the aggra-
uating of his crime in concealing the trea-
son against the Kings Maiestie; into which,
hee said, God did most iustly suffer him to fall, by
reason of his former wickednesse which he had so de-
sperately multiplied in despite of God and his holy
Word. And thereupon going on with ma-
ny sensible speeches and most feeling com-
parisons,

parisons, hee insisted on the fearefull and dreadfull danger wherein hee was, if the Lord in iudgement should looke vpon him. Notwithstanding, at last he proceeded: *Yet most mercifull father, whereat he made a stay, and repeating the word father with a marvellous loud and shrill voice, he added, why should I call thee father, that haue so many wayes and so horribly transgressed thy commandements, in all the course of my life, but especially in concealing this vile, fearefull and diuellish treason against my most gracious Soueraigne? Lord, Lord, there is nothing belongeth to me but wrath and confusion: and so went on in a strange vnaffected current of words, liuely expressing the sorrow of his heart. Yet there he stayd not, but spake forward to this purpose: Notwithstanding, Lord thou hast left me this comfort in thy Word, that thou hast sayd, Come vnto me all ye that are weary and laden, and I will refresh you. Lord I am weary, Lord I am heauily laden with my sinnes, which are innumerable: I am ready to sincke Lordeuen to hell, without thou in thy mercy put to thy hand and deliuer me. Lord thou hast promised by thine owne word, out of thine owne mouth, that thou wilt refresh the weary soule. And with that he thrust out one of his*

D

hands,

hands, and reaching as high as hee could, with a louder voice and a strained, cried, I challenge thee Lord, by that word, and by that promise which thou hast made, that thou performe and make it good to mee, that call for ease and mercie at thy hands. Lord heare mee, Lord pardon mee, Lord comfort me by thy holy spirit: assure my conscience of the forgiuenesse of my sinnes, & say to my soule, that thou art reconciled. And so after many zealous petitions vttered to the like effect, he applied to himselfe the mercies of God in Christ Iesus, in whom he assured himselfe of Gods fauour, with earnest request, that he might continue in that assurance to the end, whereof he nothing doubted.

Afterward, being brought to the scaffold, where he was to die, he vttered many things, among which I obserued these: He acknowledged to the people, that he was come thither to suffer most deseruedly; That hee had beene an offender against Almighty God in very many respects; But that none of his sinnes was so grievous vnto him, as that for which he must die: wherein, notwithstanding he was not an Actor, but a Concealer only. That he was ingyred in it by the Laird of Rastalrig and his seruant the Laird of Bour, both which, hee sayd,

were

were men that professed not religion. Whereupon he exhorted men to take heed how they accompanied with such as are not religious ; because, sayd he, with such as make not profession of religion, there is no faith, no trueth, no holding of their word, as himselfe had tried and found. But touching the treason for the concealing whereof he was condemned, he added, That he was preferred alive to open that secret mysterie which so long had layen hidde ; That God had kept him since that attempt of the Earle Gowrie from very manie dangers, but notedly from one, when being in apparent hazard of drowning, he was strangely deliuered : which, said he, was Gods worke, that I might remaine alive vnto this happie and blessed day, that the trueth might be made knowne. And now I confesse my fault to the shame of my selfe, and to the shame of the Diuell ; but to the glorie of God. And I doe it not either for feare of death, or for any hope of life, (for I haue deserued to die, and am unworthie to liue) but because it is the trueth, which I shall scale with my blood. My fault, sayth hee, is so great, that if I had a thousand liues, and could die ten thousand deaths, yet I might not make satisfaction, that I should conceale such a treason against so gracious a King. These and the like words,

when hee had spoken vpon one side of the scaffold, hee turned him to the second side, and afterward to the third, (that all the people might heare) where he spake to the same purpose as formerly he had done. And here it may not be forgotten, that in the vttering of these things his tongue serued him verie well, with words readie and significant, his memorie was perfect, his countenance reasonably erect and full of alacritie, without all feare of death, his voice was loud and audible on euery part : which was the more strange, because at the times of his examination, as also that very fore-noone, at the houre of his arraignment, his speech was low and weake ; but now so strong, as if God of purpose had giuen him power to deliuer his words in such a maner, that all the people might heare and vnderstand.

When this aboue-mentioned declarati-
on had beene made, *Sprot* returned to that
part of the scaffold where he first began to
speake, and there falling on his knees, he vt-
tered a prayer to the same purpose as is set
down in this ensuing Treatise. And hauing
ended the same, one of the Ministers praied

again,

again, and the prisoner ioyned with him, That God would forgive his sinnes, and receive his soule to mercie. After which, Sprot standing vp made diuers requests: First, that what he had deliuered by this Confession on the scaffold, might be put into his Processe, that the world might take notice of it. Secondly, that such as were present (as they might haue opportunity) would be suters vnto the King, that his Maiestie would forgive him this offence, for the which, he sayd, he craved pardon of God, of his Soueraigne, and the world. And thirdly, he desired those of the Ministerie which were present, that wheresoeuer they came they would proclame in the Pulpit his confession of his crime, his sorow for the same, and his full hope that God would pardon him. And to the end that this might be performed, hee tooke the hands of such Ministers as stood neere about him, so binding a promise on them. And heere, being told by the said Ministers and other persons of qualitie, that being so neere his departure out of the world, it concerned him to speake nothing but the trueth, and that vpon the perill of his soule: he answered, that to the

end that they should know, that hee had spoken nothing but the veritie, and that his Confession was true in euerie respect, hee would (at the last gaspe) giue them some apparent token for the confirmation of the same. Then fitting himselfe to the ladder, the Executioner commeth to him, and, as the maner is, asking forgiuenesse of him; *With all my heart*, saith hee, *for you doe but your office, and it is the thing I desire; because suffering in my bodie, I shall in my soule be ioyned vnto my Saviour.* Ascending vp to the ladder, he desired the people to sing a Psalm with him, which they did with many a weeping eye. Hee named the sixt Psalm, and beginning it or taking it vp himselfe, in euerie verse or line thereof hee went before the people, singing both lowd and tunably vnto the very end. Then once againe confirming and auowing his former confession, he couered his owne face, and commending his soule to God, hee was turned off the ladder; where hanging by the necke some little while, hee three seuerall times gaue a lowd clap with his hands, that all the standers by might heare: which was the signe

or

or token (as it seemeth) which he a little before had sayd that hee would giue at his last gaspe, for the ratification and auowing of those things, which by his confession hee had so many times declared and deliuered. These things were done in the open sight of the Sunne, in the Kings Capitall towne, at the Market-crosse in *Edenborough*, in the presence of diuers thousands of all sorts: of the Nobilitie, of the Clergie, of the Gentry, of the Burgeses, of women and children, my selfe with the rest of the English Ministers standing by and looking on, and giuing GOD the glorie, that after so long a space as eight yeeres and eight dayes (for so it was by iust computation after the attempt of *Gowrie*) he was pleased to giue so noble a testimonie vnto that, which by some maligners had beene secretly called in question without any ground or reason. I haue reported at length those particulars which I heard and saw, which that honourable personage who wrote this Treatise following doth somewhat more briefly deliuer, but yet both of vs very truly, as thousands can witnesse.

I

^t Eccl. 10.
20.

Out of both these narrations there may diuers obseruations be gathered. As first, how hainous a thing it is in the sight of God himselfe, for subiects of what nature or qualitie soeuer, to enter into conspiracie against the life and person of the Lords Anointed: for Almighty God hath threatned to discover these traiterous enterprises; and if no other way, yet by some strange and miraculous fashion. Hee who spake against cruell imaginations of the heart, *Curse not the King, no not in thy thought: for the fowle of the heauen shall carie the voice, and that which hath wings shall declare the matter*; what will he do, when acts of hostilitie in rebellious maner shall be entered into? And doth his Diuine Maiestie disclose it, and will he not also punish it? The example of that Earle Gowrie among thousands of others may be a sufficient instruction in this behalfe, who for his Soueraignes loue and gracious fauour testified in many respects, and intended many more wayes vnto him, returning nothing but vngratefulnessse and traiterous resolutions, digged a pit for another, but by Gods iudgement fell into it himselfe: and did not only lose in

one

one day his fidelitie, estimation and life, but ouerthrew his house and all the honour of his familie, thorow succeeding generations. Therefore farre be it at all times from any noble heart to walke in his wayes, or vpon any occasion to entertaine such discontentment as may grow to vndutifulnesse: for when the wrath of God shall ouertake men offending in this kinde, and the iustice of a King shall once proceed against them, what horror must there needs be in their bowels and conscience? what trembling & affrighting in their very soule? If this poore man Sprot, for concealing that odious combination, found such touches in himselfe, and such remorse in his heart, what quaking and dreadfulness may we thinke will fall on him who is guiltie of the highest act of treason and rebellion?

Secondly, wee heere may see the Lords protection ouer Christian Kings and Princes; whom as hee placeth next himselfe in maiestie and authoritie, and calleth them by his owne name, *I haue said, "Ye are Gods*; so he bleisseth and vpholdeth them as his Deputies and Vice-gerents, men representing

2

["]Psal. 82.
6.

E

himselfe

himselfe, especially if sincerely they serue and feare and loue him. He is a God of order, and loueth subordination in all Kingdomes and Countreys, where if hee grace, countenance and protect inferiour Magistrates, what will hee doe to the heads and chiefe gouernours of his people, who are next to his owne greatnesse? Hee hath set them aboue other in honour and glorie, which causeth them to be more obserued according to their state: but withall, the prayers of their subiects are powred out for their welfare, day & night, and at all times; which concurring with their owne requests to God, do find acceptance with the Highest to their noted prosperitie and eminent felicitie. It preserveth from many perils, to haue at all times and seasons the prayers and supplications of faithfull men and women houering ouer their heads, which may be perpetuall Remenibrancers for them to their heauenly Father, if by humane fragilitie and vnauoidable imperfections they should forget themselves.

3

Thirdly, we may note more particularly the sauing health of God vpon our graci-

ous Soueraigne; to whom as the Lord hath giuen many blessings and much happinesse beyond all his Progenitours, so hee hath mainteined and protected his person in a maruellous and strange maner, not onely from his cradle vnto this day, but (as it is very well knowen) from before his coming into the world. And how did the Lord free his seruant euen from the brincke of the pit, and from the gates of the graue at the time of *Gowries* attempt? as also since that day, when those wicked sonnes of *Belial*, the staine of the Land and Countrey wherein they were borne, intended that Powder-treason? Which as on the one side it expecteth at the hands of his Maiestie a greater thankfulnessse to God the King of kings, so on the other side it calleth for of vs who sit peaceably vnder his shadow, euerlasting tokens of gratefulnesse to so mercifull a Lord, and heartie obedience to our Soueraigne, whom God hath raised vp y defended, protected, mainteined, vpheld with his extraordinarie fauour to no common end; but to the enlarging of his Church, to the further ruine of Antichrist; to the vni-

ting of Kingdomes, to the comfort of all the godly dispersed throrow *Europe*. And happy is hee, not who can finde deuices, and cast imaginarie perils to hinder such a worke, but who in his poore place can with a faithfull heart giue furtherance to the same.

4

Fourthly, as many blessings from heauen haue been powred on the head of his Maie-
 tie, so it is not the least, that *tanquam è postliminio*, after so many yeeres, and that as from the bones of a dead man, when living men would not beleue it, God hath giuen farther light to the opening of the conspiracie of that vngodly Earle *Gowrie*; which some few persons, affected more to a rebell that is dead, than to their liuing Souereigne, did endeavour to disguise and maske at their owne pleasure. The strange conceits of whom, I can neuer sufficiently woonder at; that men professing conscience and zeale to the truth, should vpon no kind of ground or shew of probabilitie, suffer such vnreuerent thoughts to enter into their hearts; especially against his sacred person, whose life hath beene so immaculate and vnspotted in the world, so free from all touch of vicious-

nesse

nesse and staining imputation, that euen malice it selfe (which leaueth nothing vnsearched) could neuer finde true blemish in it, nor cast any probable aspersiō on it. Against his sacred person, whom as they must acknowledge to be zealous as *Dauid*, learned and wise as the *Salomon* of our age, religious as *Iosias*, carefull of spreading Christs faith as *Constantine the Great*; so if they will speake truth, they must confesse to be iust as *Moses*, vndefiled in all his wayes as *Iehosaphat* or *Hezechias*, full of clemencie as another *Theodosius*, farre from spilling the blood of any of his Nobilitie, but rather sparing those who haue lift vp their hand against him. Notwithstanding, when preposterous affection had so blinded these men, that they would not see this truth, the Lord hath giuen light yet once more to the rectifying of their iudgements. A singular example of Gods vnlimited and vnbounded wisdom, who will doe things as he liketh. That when as *S. Iohn* sayth, "*Qui sordescit, sordescat adhuc*, He that list to be peeuish and refractarie and selfe-conceited, did thinke hee might haue persisted and died in that peeishnesse and

" *Apoc. 22.*
11.

refractorie conceit, and supposed that neuer any thing in this world should haue beene able to reforme him, may see before his face so illustrious a testimony of his misconceited fancie, and almost vnsatisfiable vndutifulnesse, that vnlesse his face be hardened and his heart obdured against both heauen and earth, he must cease to be peruerse. God is the God of truth: and he who is the protectour of innocency in the poorest, will certainly be the maintainer and defender of integritie and sinceritie in his noblest and dearest seruant. It is fit that he should haue his owne will, to put off and prolong his mercies till the time which seemeth good to himselfe, that men may wait vpon him, and patiently expect, and still tarie the Lords leisure: yea that his power may be knowen, who can bring light out of darknesse, and good out of euill, and truth out of treason; who can giue hope beyond hope. But when hee is once resolved that things acted in secret shall be preached vpon the house top, that iniquitie shalbe opened, that simplicitie shall be cleered, and innocencie disburdened of scandalous imputations, if

men

men would not speake, or children sound out the trueth in the streets, * yet the verie stones shall crie, as our Sauour once answered to the maligning Pharisees. Blessed be the GOD of iustice, who cleereth vp the fame of his holy ones, when malice would obscure it.

* Luc. 19.
40.

Lastly, heere may be a warning to men of mine owne profession, I meane the Ministers of the Gospell, that in cases of highest nature between a King and his rebell they conceiue not things to the woorst, and (because they will be opposite to him whom most of all they should honor) by buzzings and whisperings, and secret suggestions, without all ground of trueth, labour to sow sedition in the eares of women and children, or in the mündes of men either weake or ill disposed. For as the lips of the Priest should alwayes preserue knowledge, so should they preserue trueth. And we are to go before our flocks and Congregations in obedience and obsequiousnesse vnto the Christian Magistrate, not in sowing sedition, or making of mutinies, to the disturbance of the State. Who should sticke clo-

5

y Mal. 2.7.

fer to *Moyſes* welding ſo huge a charge, than *Aaron* and his tribe? And who ſhould rather labour to doe his Prince all right, than the Miniſter of the Goſpell, who next after teaching men their dutie to GOD, is made to teach obedience and reſpectiueneſſe vnto Kings? And who more deſerueth to be chaſtiſed than he, if he wilfully tranſgreſſe?

Theſe things I thought not amiſſe to obſerue to thee, Chriſtian Reader, before thou come to the peruſing of this plaine and true narration, touching the examination, arraignment and death of the perſon here deſcribed. GOD Almighty bleſſe the Kings Maieſtie, grant vnto him many dayes full of pietie and felicitie; and after this mortall life expired, ſend him an euerlaſting Crown of glorie, through Ieſus Chriſt our Lord.

Amen.

Thine in the Lord,

GEORGE ABBOT.



THE
EXAMINATIONS,
ARRAIGNMENT, AND

Conuiction of *George Sprot*, Notary
in *Aye-mouth* : *Together with his*
constant and extraordinarie beha-
uor at his death in *Edenborough*,
August 12. 1608.

Written and set forth by *Sir William Hart*
Knight, L. Iustice of *Scotland*.

Whereby appeareth the treasonable deuice betweene
IOHN late Earle of *Gowrie* and *Robert Logane*
of *Restalrig* (commonly called *Lesterig*) plotted
by them for the cruell murdering of our
most gracious Soueraine.



Thought good (gentle Reader)
for satisfaction of the true hear-
ted and well affected subiects to
their gracious Soueraine, and
closing of the mouthes of his
Maiesties malicious enemies, to
spend a little time in discourse of
a strange and almost miraculous accident, that fell
out of late, anent the reuealing of the practises of

Gowries treasonable Conspiracie, intended against his Highnesse royall person. Which purpose was hidden and concealed, vntill the time it pleased God to moue one *George Sprot* (who was priue thereto) to manifest and confesse the same, as by this that followeth may appeare.

This *Sprot* after diuers examinations being moued with remorse of conscience, for the long concealing of the foreknowledge of this treasonable conspiracie, confesseth, declareth and deponeth, with the perill of his owne life,

That he knew perfectly, that Robert Logane, late of Restalrig, was priue and vpon the foreknowledge of Gowries treasonable conspiracie. And for the greater assurance of his knowledge, deponeth, That he knew that there were diuers Letters interchanged betwixt them, anent the treasonable purpose aforesayd, in the beginning of the Moneth of Iuly 1600. Which Letters Iames Bour, called Laird Bour, seruitor to Restalrig, (who was imployed mediatour betwixt them, and priuy to all that errand) had in keeping, and shewed the same to Sprot in the place of Fast-Cattle. The first of Gowries Letters conteining in effect, as followeth:

Good Laird of Restalrig, you vnderstand what conditions should haue beene betwixt vs, of before. Indeed I purposed to haue come by your house, but vnderstanding of your absence in Lothiane I came not. Alwayes I wish you either your selfe to come West, or els to send some sure messenger, who may conferre with mee anent the purpose you know. But rather would I
wish

wish your selfe to come, not only for that errand, but for some other thing that I haue to aduise with you.

To the which Letter Restalrig wrate an answer, and sent the same to the Earle of Gowrie, by the said Iames Bour, of the tenure following:

MR Lord, my most humble dutie and seruice heartily remembred. At the receit of your Lordships Letter I am so comforted, that I can neither utter my ioy, nor finde my selfe sufficiently able to requite your Lordship with due thanks. And perswade your Lordship in that matter, I shall be as forward for your Lordships honour, as if it were mine owne cause. And I thinke there is no liuing Christian that would not be content to reuenge that Machiauellian massacring of our deare friends, yea howbeit it should be, to venture and hazzard life, lands and all other thing els. My heart can binde me to take part in that matter, as your Lordship shall finde better prooffe thereof. But one thing would be done: namely, That your Lordship should be circumspect and earnest with your brother, that hee be not rash in any speeches touching the purpose of Padua. My Lord, you may easily vnderstand, that such a purpose as your Lordship intendeth, can not be done rashly, but with deliberation. And I thinke for my selfe, that it were most meet to haue the men your Lordship spake of, readie in a boat or barke, and addresse them as if they were taking pastime on the sea, in such faire Summer time. And if your Lordship could thinke good either your selfe to come to my house of Fast-Castle by sea, or to send your brother, I should haue the place very quiet,

and well provided after your Lordships aduertisement, where we should haue no scant of the best Venison can be had in England. And no others should haue accesse to haunt the place, during your Lordships being heere, but all things very quiet. And if your Lordship doubt of safe landing, I shall provide all such necessaries as may serue for your Lordships arriuall, within a flight shot of the house. And perswade your Lordship you shall be as sure and quiet heere, while we haue settled our plot, as if you were in your owne chamber: for I trust and am assured we shall heare word within few dayes from them your Lordship knoweth of; for I haue care to see what ships comes home by. Your Lordship knoweth I haue kept the L. Bothwell quietly in this house in his greatest extremitie, say both King and Counsell what they liked. I hope (if all things come to passe, as I trust they shall) to haue both your Lordship and his Lordship at one good dinner afore I die. Hæc iocose, to animate your Lordship: I doubt not my Lord but all things shall be well. And I am resolved, wherof your Lordship shall not doubt, of anything on my part, yea to perill life, land, honor and goods; yea the hazzard of hell shall not affray me from that; yea although the scaffold were alreadie set up. The sooner the matter were done, it were the better; for the Kings bucke-hunting will be shortly: and I hope it shall prepare some daintie cheere for vs to dine against the next yeere. I remember well my Lord, and I will neuer forget, so long as I liue, that merrie sport which your Lordships brother tolde me of a Noble man at Padua: for I thinke that a parascue to this purpose. My Lord, thinke nothing that I commit the secrecy hereof, and credit to this bearer: for I dare not only venture

my life, lands, and all other things I haue els, on his credit, but I durst hazard my soule in his keeping, if it were possible in earthly men: for I am so perswaded of his truth and fidelitie. And I trow (as your Lordship may aske him if it be true) he would goe to hell gates for mee: and hee is not beguiled of my part to him. And therefore I doubt not but this will perswade your Lordship to giue him trust in this matter, as to my selfe. But I pray your Lordship direct him home with all possible haste, and giue him strait command, that he take not a wincke sleepe, while hee see me againe, after hee come from your Lordship. And as your Lordship desireth in your letter to me, either riue or burne, or els send backe againe with the bearer: for so is the fashion I grant.

Which letter written euery word with Restalrigs owne hand, was subscribed by him after his accustomed maner, Restalrig. And was sent to the Earle Gowrie by the sayd James Bour. After whose retorne within fve dayes with a new letter from Gowrie, hee stayed all night with Restalrig in^a Gunnes-greene: and Restalrig rode to Lothiane the morne thereafter, where he stayed fve or six dayes. Then after his returning, past to Fast-Castle, where he remained a certeine short space.

^a A house
of Restal-
rigs.

And farther deponeth, that he saw and heard Restalrig reade the last letter, which Bour brought backe to him from Gowrie, and their conference there-anent. And heard Bour say; Sir, if ye thinke to make any commoditie by this dealing, lay your hand to your heart. And Restalrig answered, that he would do as he thought

best. And farther sayd to Bour, Howbeit he should sell all his owne land that he had in the world, he would passe thorow with the Earle of Gowrie, for that matter would giue him greater contentment, nor if he had the whole Kingdome: and rather or hee should falsifie his promise, and recall his vow that hee had vowed to the Earle of Gowrie, hee should spend all that he had in the world, and hazard his life with his Lordship. To whom Bour answered: You may doe as you please Sir, but it is not my counsell, that you should be so sudden in that other matter. But for the condition of Dirlton, I would like very well of it. To whom Restalrig answered, Content your selfe, I am at my wits end.

And farther Sprout deponeth, that he entred himselfe there-after in conference with Bour, and demanded what was done betwixt the Laird and the Earle of Gowrie. And Bour answered, that hee beleued that the Laird should get Dirlton without either golde or siluer, but feared that it should be as deare vnto him. And Sprout inquiring how that could be; Bour sayd they had another pie in hand nor the selling of any land: but prayed Sprout, for Gods sake, that hee would let be, and not trouble himselfe with the Lairds businesse; for he feared, within few dayes, the Laird would either be landlesse or lifelesse.

And the sayd George Sprout being demanded if this his deposition was true, as he would answer vpon the saluation and condemnation of his soule; and if hee will go to death with it, seeing he knoweth the time and houre of his death to approach very neere; deponeth for

answer,

answer, that hee hath not a desire to liue, and that hee knowes the time to be short, hauing care of no earthly thing, but only for cleering of his conscience in the truth of all these things, to his owne shame before the world, and to the honour of God, and safetie of his owne soule; that all the former points and circumstances contained in this his deposition, with the deposition made by him the first day of Iuly last, and the whole remanent depositions made by him sen that day are true, which hee will take on his conscience, and as hee hopeth to be saued of God, and that he would seale the same with his blood.

And farther being demanded where this aboue written letter, written by Restalrig to the Earle of Gowrie, which was returned againe by Iames Bour, is now; deponeth that hee abstracted it quietly from Bour, in looking ouer and reading Bours letters, which he had in keeping of Restalrigs; and that he left the aboue written letter in his chest among his writings, when hee was taken and brought away, and that it is closed and folded within a piece of paper.

This foresaid deposition was made by him the tenth of August 1608, written by James Primerose, Clerke of his Maiesties Priuie Counsell, and subscribed with the sayd George Sprot's owne hand, In the presence of

The Earle of Dunbar.
The Earle of Lothiane.
The Bishop of Rosse.
The L. Schune.
The L. Halyrudeshouse.

The L. Blantyre.

Sir Willam Hart, his Maiesties Iustice.

M. John Hall,

M. Patricke Galoway,

M. Peter Hewart : Ministers of the Kirkes
of Edenborough.

Subscribed with all their hands.

And also the eleuenth day of the foresaid moneth and yeere, the said *George Sprot* being re-examined, in the presence of a number of the Counsell and Ministers afore said, and it being declared to him, that the time of his death now verie neere approched, and that therefore they desired him to cleere his conscience with an vpright declaration of the truth; and that he would not abuse the holy name of God, to make him, as it were, a witnesse to vntruths : and specially, being desired that he would not take vpon him the innocent blood of any person dead or quick, by making and forging lies & vntruths against them :

Deponeth, that he acknowledgeth his grievous offences to God (who hath made him a reasonable creature) in abusing his holy name with many vntruths, sen the beginning of this Processe : but now being resolu'd to die, and attending the houre and time, when it shall please God to call him, he deponeth with many attestations, and as he wisheth to be participant of the Kingdome of heauen, where he may be countable and answerable vpon the saluation, and condemnation of his soule, for all his doings and speeches in this earth, that all that hee

hath

hath deponed sen the fifth day of Iuly last, in all his severall depositions were true in every point and circumstance of the same; and that there is no untrueth in any point thereof.

And hauing desired M. Patricke Galoway to make a prayer, whereby he might be comforted now in his trouble : Which was done:

The said Deponer. with many teares after the prayer affirmed this his deposition to be true: and for the confirmation thereof, declared, that he would seale the same with his blood.

And the next day thereafter, being the twelfth of the foresaid moneth of August, the said George was brought forth and presented in iudgement vpon pannel, within the Towlebowth of Edenborough, before Sir William Hart of Preston, his Maiestis Iustice; and there in a fenced Court holden by him that day, assisted by the honourable persons following, his Assesors in that errand, They are to say,

Alexander Earle of Dumfermling

La Chancellor.

George Earle of Dunbar, Treasurer.

John Archbishop of Glascom.

David Bithop of Ross.

Gavin Bithop of Galloway.

Andrew Bithop of Brechine.

David Earle of Crawford.

Marke Earle of Lothiane.

John L. Abtrnethy of Saltoun.

James L. of Balmerinoth, Secretarie.

Walter L. Blantyre.

John L. Halysrudhouse.

Michael L. Burley.

Sir Richard Cokburne of Clarkintoun,
Knight.

M. John Preston of Fenton Barnes,
Collector Generall.

Sir John Skeyne of Currhil, Knight,

Clerke of Register:

was delated, accused, and pursued by Sir Thomas Hamilton of Binning, Knight, Advocate to our Sovereigne Lord for his Highnesse Entries, of the times conteined in his Inditement, produced by the said Advocate; whereof the tenure followeth.

George Sprot Notarie in Ayrmouth, is accused and indicted, for so much as John sometime Earle of Gowrie having most cruelly, detestably, and treasonably conspired, in the moneth of Iuly the yeere of God 1600 yeeres, to murder our deare and most gracious Souveraigne the Kings most excellent Majestie and having imparted that devilish purpose to Robert Logane of Restalrig, who allowed of the same, and most willingly and readily undertooke to be partaker thereof: The same coming to your knowledge at the times and in the maner particularly after specified, you most unnaturally, maliciously, and treasonably concealed the same, and was arte and part thereof in maner following. In the first, in the said moneth of Iuly six hundred yeeres, after you had perceived and knownen, that divers letters and messages had past betwixt the said sometime Earle

of Gowrie, and the said Robert Logane of Restalrig, you being in the house of Fast-Castle, you saw and read a letter written by the said Robert Logane of Restalrig with his owne hand to the said John sometime Earle of Gowrie, of the tenure following.

MR Lord, my most humble dutie and seruice heartily remembred. At the receit of your Lordships Letter I am so comforted, that I can neither utter my ioy, nor finde my selfe sufficiently able to requite your Lordship with due thanks. And perswade your Lordship in that matter, I shall be as forward for your Lordships honour, as if it were mine owne cause. And I thinke there is no living Christian that would not be content to reuenge that Machiavellian massacring of our deare friends, yea howbeit it should be, to venture and hazzard life, lands and all other thing els. My heart can binde me to take part in that matter, as your Lordship shall finde better prooffe thereof. But one thing would be done: namely, That your Lordship should be circumspect and earnest with your brother, that hee be not rash in any speeches touching the purpose of Padua.

And a certaine space after the execution of the aforesaid treason, the said Robert Logane of Restalrig hauing desired the Laird of Bour to deliuer to him the foresaid letter, or els to burne it; And Bour hauing giuen to you all tickets and letters, which he then had either concerning Restalrig or others, to see the same, because he could not reade himselfe, you abstracted the aboue written letter, and reteined the same in your owne hands, and diuers times read it, containing farther in

substance nor is formerly set downe, according to the words following.

My Lord, you may easily understand, that such a purpose as your Lordship intendeth, can not be done rashly, but with deliberation. And I thinke for my selfe, that it were most meet to haue the men your Lordship spake of, readie in a boat or barke, and addresse them as if they were taking pastime on the sea, in such faire Summer time. And if your Lordship could thinke good either your selfe to come to my house of East-Castle by sea, or to send your brother, I should haue the place very quiet, and well provided after your Lordships aduertisement, where we should haue no scant of the best Venison can be had in England. And no others should haue accesse to haunt the place, during your Lordships being heere, but all things very quiet. And if your Lordship doubt of safe landing, I shall provide all such necessaries as may serue for your Lordships arriuall, within a flight shot of the house. And perswade your Lordship you shall be as sure and quiet heere, while we haue settled our plot, as if you were in your owne chamber: for I trust and am assured we shall haue word within few dayes from them your Lordship knoweth of; for I haue care to see what ships comes home by. Your Lordship knoweth I haue kept the L. Bothwell quietly in this house in his greatest extremitie, say both King and Counsell what they liked. I hope (if all things come to passe, as I trust they shall) to haue both your Lordship and his Lordship at one good dinner afore I die. Hæc iocose, to animate your Lordship: I doubt not my Lord but all things shall be well. And I am resolved, wherof your Lordship shall not doubt,

doubt, of anything on my part, yea to perill life, land, honor and goods; yea the hazard of hell shall not affray me from that, yea although the scaffold were alreadie set up. The sooner the matter were done, it were the better; for the Kings bucke-hunting will be shortly: and I hope it shall prepare some daintie cheere for vs to dine against the next yeere. I remember well my Lord, and I will neuer forget, so long as I liue, that merrie sport which your Lordships brother tolde me of a Noble man at Padua: for I thinke that a parascue to this purpose. My Lord, thinke nothing that I commit the secrecy hereof, and credit to this bearer: for I dare not only venture my life, lands, and all other things I haue els, on his credit, but I durst hazard my soule in his keeping, if it were possible in earthly men: for I am so perswaded of his truth and fidelitie. And I trow (as your Lordship may aske him if it be true) he would goe to hell gates for mee: and hee is not beguiled of my part to him. And therefore I doubt not but this will perswade your Lordship to giue him trust in this matter, as to my selfe. But I pray your Lordship direct him home with all possible haste, and giue him strait command, that he take not a wincke sleepe, while hee see me againe, after hee come from your Lordship. And as your Lordship desireth in your letter to me, either riue or burne, or els send backe againe with the bearer: for so is the fashion I grant.

Which letter written euery word with the said Robert Logane his owne hand, was subscribed by him after his accustomed maner, with this word, Restalrig.

And albeit by the contents of the foresaid letter you

knew perfectly the trueth of the said most treasonable conspiracie, and the said Rober Logane of Restalrig his foreknowledge, allowance and guiltinesse thereof; like as you was assured of the same by his receiuing of diuers letters sent by Gowrie to him, and by his sending of letters to Gowrie for the same purpose, and by sundrie conferences betwixt the said Robert Logane of Restalrig, and the said Iames Bour, in your presence and hearing concerning the said treason; as well in the said moneth of Iulie immediatlie preceding the attempting of the said treason, as at diuers other times shortly thereafter, as likewise by the reueiling thereof to you by the said Iames Bour, who was upon the knowledge and deuice of the said treason, and was imployed as ordinarie messenger by the said Robert Logane of Restalrig, to the said sometime Earle of Gowrie, in the trafficke of the said damnable treason, whereby your knowledge, concealing and guiltinesse of the said treason was undeniable: yet, for farther manifestation thereof, about Iulie 1602 yeeres, the said Robert Logane of Restalrig shewed to you that Bour had tolde him, that hee had beene somewhat rash to let you see a letter which came from the Earle of Gowrie to the said Robert Logane of Restalrig, who then urged you to tell what you understood by that letter. To whom you answered, that you tooke the meaning of it to be, that he had beene upon the counsell and purpose of Gowries conspiracie. And hee answered you, what euer hee had done, the worst was his owne: But if you would sweare to him, that you should neuer reueile any thing of that matter to any person, hee should be the best sight that euer you saw: and in token of farther recompence hee

then

then gaue you twelue pound of siluer. Neuerthelesse, albeit you knew perfectly the whole practises and progresse of the said treason, from the beginning thereof as said is, as well by the sight of the said letters, as also by your conferences with the said James Bour, called Laird Bour, and Robert Logane of Restalrig, yet during all the dayes of their life times, who liued till the yeere of God 1606 yeeres or thereby; and so by the space of six yeeres after that you knew the guiltinesse of the treasonable conspiracie aforesaid, you most treasonably concealed the same: and so you was and is arre and parte of the said most vniuersall, detestable and treasonable conspiracie, and of the knowledge and concealing thereof: and therefore you ought and should incurre, under-lie and suffer the sentence and paine of high treason. To the token, that ye haue not only by your depositions subscribed with your hand and solemnly made in presence of manie of the L. L. of his Maesties Counsell, and of the Ministers of the Borough of Edenborough, of the dates, the fifth, fifteenth and sixteenth dayes of Iulie last by-past, and tenth and eleuenth dayes of August instant, confessed euerie head, point and article of the Inditement aboue written, but also by diuers other your depositions subscribed likewise with your hand, you haue ratified the same, and sworne constantly to abide thereat, and to seal the same with your blood, which you can not denie.

Which Inditement being read openly in iudgement to the said George Sprot, before he was put to the knowledge of an Inquest, he confessed in the presence of the said L. Iustice and whole Assessors aboue named, the same and euery point thereof to be

true and of veritie. And therefore the Iustice ordeined the same Inditement to be put to the knowledge of a condigne Inquest of the honest, famous and discreet persons vnder-written. They are to say:

William Trumbill of Ardre.

William Fisher Merchant, Burgesse of Edenborough.

Robert Stuart there.

Edward Johnston Merchant, Burgesse there.

Harbert Maxwell of Cauens.

James Tennent of Linhouse.

William Trumbill, Burgesse of Edenborough.

George Browne in Gorgymill.

Iohn Hucheson Merchant, Burgesse of Edenborough.

Iohn Leyis Merchant, Burgesse there.

James Someruell Merchant, Burgesse there.

William Simintoun, Burgesse there.

Iohn Cunnison in Dirlton.

Thomas Smith Merchant, Burgesse of Edenborough.

And Iohn Cowtis, Burgesse there.

Which persons of Inquest being chosen, sworn and admitted, after the acculation of the sayd *George Sprot*, before them of the said treasonable, hainous and detestable crimes contained in the Inditement aforesaid, and reading of the said Inditement of new againe in his and their presence; the said *George Sprot* of new confessed in the audience of the said Inquest the foresaid Inditement and euerie point thereof to be true and of veritie. Whereupon the said *Sir Thomas Hamilton of Binning Knight*, his Maiesties

Advocate,

Aduocate, as before, asked act and instrument. And in respect thereof protested in case the said Inquest clensed him of the said crimes, for wilfull and manifest error. And therefore the whole fornamed persons of Inquest remoued all together forth of Court to the Inquest house, where they being inclosed, by pluralitie of votes elected and made choice of the said *Harbert Maxwell* of *Cauens* to be Chancellor or Fore-man. And hauing with great deliberation grauelie considered the effect and whole circumstances of the said Inditement, and constant iudiciall confession made by the partie pannelled, as well before the said L. Iustice and his Assessors, as thereafter in presence of the Inquest themselves, they all voted vpon the whole effect of the said Inditement. And being ripelie and well aduised therewith, re-entred againe in Court, where they all in one voice by the mouth of the said Chancellor or Foreman, found, pronounced, and declared the said *George Sprot* (according to his owne confession iudicially made in their presence and audience) to be guiltie, culpable, filed and conuict of arte and parte of the said most hainous, detestable and treasonable conspiracie conteined in his Inditement aboue-written, and of the knowledge and concealing thereof. For the which cause the said Iustice, by the mouth of the Dempster of Court, by his sentence and doome decerned and ordeined, The said *George Sprot* to betaken to the Market Crosse of *Edenborough*, and there to be hanged vpon a gibbet till he be dead, and thereafter his head to be stricken from his bodie, and his bodie to be quartered and demeaned as a Traitor,

and his head to be affixed and set vp vpon a pricke of iron vpon the highest part of the Towlebewth of *Edenborough*, where the Traitor *Gowrie*, and others of the Conspiratours heads stand ; and his whole lands, heritages, tacks, stedings, roomes, possessions, goods and geere to be forfeited and eschet to our Souereigne Lord his vse, for his treasonable and detestable crimes aboue specified. Which was pronounced for doome.

*Extractum de libro Actorum Adiornalis
S. D. N. Regis per me D. Iohannem Cob-
burne de Ormestoun militem, Clericum
Iustitiaria eiusdem generalem. Sub meis
signo & subscriptione manualibus.*

The doome being pronounced, the said *George* was conuoyed to a priuie house, where he remained at his secret meditation, and afterwards in conference with the Ministers and others, vnto the time all things was provided necessarie for his execution: and being brought to the place where he was to die, he in publike audience of the whole people, at the three sides of the scaffold, ratified the former depositions made by him concerning the treasonable practises intended and deuised betwixt *Gowrie* and *Restalrig*, for the murdering of our most gracious Souereigne, and bereauing his Highnesse of his life, and his owne knowledge and concealing of their guiltinesse. For the which he humbly craued God and his Maiestie forgiuenesse, being most forie and griued that he had offended God and the Kings Maiestie in

concealing

concealing such a vile, detestable and vnnaturall treason, enterprised by them against his gracious Soueraigne, who hath beene euer so good and gracious to his subiects, protesting that if he had a thousand liues to render, and were able to suffer ten thousand deaths, it were not a sufficient satisfaction and recompense for his offence. And that God had preserued him from many great perils, when his life was in extreme danger, to bring him to this publike declaration of that detestable and horrible fact in presence of all the people, vttered by him in these words following: *To my owne shame, and to the shame of the diuell, but to the glorie of God.* And for satisfaction of the consciences of all those (if any be) that haue or can make any doubt of the trueth of this so cleere a matter, he acknowledged that his haunting with *Restalrig*, who was a man without religion, and subiect to manie other vices, as also his continuall being in companie with the Laird of *Bour*, who likewise was irreligious and without feare of God, and his being ingyred by them into their matters after his first sight of *Restalrigs* letter written by him to *Gowrie*, brought him from one sinne to another, and consequently vpon this grieuous crime, for the which most iustly, worthily and willingly he is now to render his life. And thereupon he desired all the people there present to beware of euill companie, and namely of the societie of those who are void of religion. And farther desired, that this his declaration might be inserted in his Proesse, and that the Ministers of Gods word would publish the same from their Pulpits to the people: for which purpose also he tooke diuers of them there

present by the hand, with their promise to doe the same, saying to them, That this was the most glorious day that euer his eyes did see. In the middest almost of these speeches, he did prostrate himselfe and fell vpon his knees in presence of the whole people, making a verie pithie prayer, in the forme following.

O Father, how should I call thee Father, that am so unworthy to be called thy sonne? I haue wandred astray like a lost sheepe, and thou of thy mercie hast brought me home vnto thee, and hast preserved my life from many dangers untill this day, that I might reueile these hidden and secret mysteries, to mine owne shame, and thy glorie. Thou hast promised, that whensoever a sinner from his heart will repent and call to thee, that thou wilt heare him, and grant him mercie.

And thus he continued a good space in a most feruent prayer, to the great admiration of all the standers by. Afterward ganging vp the ladder with his hands loose & vntied, being on the vpper part thereof, he desired libertie to sing the fixt Psalm, and requested the people to accompanie him in the singing thereof. Which being granted, he tooke vp the Psalm himselfe with a very loud and strong voice, far by his accustomed forme, being before his coming to the scaffold a weake spirited man, of feeble voice and vtterance; and was assisted with the number of a thousand persons at the least, who accompanied him in singing that Psalm. After the ending whereof he openly repeated and ratified his said former confession: and with that, recommending his soule

soule to God, hee fastened a cloth about his owne eyes, and was cast ouer the ladder, so ending this mortall life.

I had almost forgotten that, which in this action of his death was strange, and in a maner maruellous. For being vrged by the Ministers and other of good ranke vpon the scaffold, that now at his end he should declare nothing but the trueth (touching the matter for which he suffered) on the perill of his owne saluation, or condemnation of his soule; hee for the greater assurance of that his constant and true deposition, promised (by the assistance of God) to giue them an open and euident token before the yeelding of his spirit. Which hee accomplished thereafter. For before his last breath, when he had hung a pretie space, hee lift vp his hands a good heighth, and clapped them together aloud, three seuerall times, to the great woonder and admiration of all the beholders. And verie soone thereafter he yeelded his spirit.

By this Narration afore-going, each man may learne, that the contriuing and plotting of treason against Kings and Princes, is a thing odious in the sight of God, and therefore ordinarily is disclosed by him, at first or at last, by one meanes or another: and that it is not good to conceale any such conspiracie intended byemie or friend, because the life and safetie of a Christian King, who is the common Father of the Countrey, ought to be dearer to all good men, than the loue or acquaintance of any whatsoever: who howbeit hee make shew of manie faire

things in him, yet in this alone, That hee purposeth euill against the Lords Anointed; sufficiently declareth himselfe to be of a rebellious and vngodly disposition. And how wofull the fruit is either of such traitourous resolutions, or of the concealing of them, may be seene (as in a glasse) both in the sudden end of the Earle *Gowrie*, and in the execution of this — *George Sprot* with more deliberation.



